



For Immediate Release:

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News Release

CHIP to Open Enrollment Just in Time for Back To School

(Salt Lake City, Utah) – The Utah Department of Health (UDOH) will be accepting applications for CHIP (Utah's Children's Health Insurance Program) during Open Enrollment, July 28-August 1, 2003. This is your chance to get your kids health insurance coverage before you send them back to school.

Families can learn more about CHIP by making a simple call to **1-877-KIDS-NOW** to receive an application by mail or find a UDOH eligibility office in their area. For one week, beginning Monday, July 28, and ending Friday, August 1, applications will be accepted in person, online at www.health.utah.gov/chip or by mail postmarked between July 28th and August 1st. The UDOH will accept all eligible Utah children who apply during this Open Enrollment session.

Approximately 6.8 percent of Utah's children are without health insurance, according to the 2001 Health Status Survey. CHIP is a state health insurance plan for children. To get CHIP, children must qualify based on family size and household income. For example, a family of four earning up to \$36,800 a year may qualify. To qualify, children must also be under age 19, U.S. citizens or legal residents, and not currently covered by health insurance. Eligible families may be required to pay premiums of up to \$25 every three months. Premiums and small co-pays make it possible for CHIP to insure more children. Since 1998, CHIP has covered more than 61,000 Utah kids and today enrollment is at nearly 24,000 children. This year, CHIP has the capacity to accept more children and has restored dental benefits, thanks to an appropriation of \$1.5 million from the 2003 Utah State Legislature.

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“The Department is pleased to open CHIP for children to enroll at back to school time,” said Rod Betit, UDOH Executive Director. “Families who enroll on CHIP can get their children the check ups they need and send them back to school ready to learn.”

“My kids are active in sports at school and it is a relief to have CHIP in case they get hurt,” says April Perry, of Kearns, Utah, and parent of five children on CHIP.

If the budget allows, the UDOH expects to announce dates for the next Open Enrollment session in the first quarter of 2004. The dates and length of Open Enrollment periods are determined by how many children enroll, the number who leave the program, and available funding.

To inform families about open enrollment, the UDOH will conduct a TV, radio, and print “A Good Call for Kids” Campaign during July. Kids featured in the spots have benefited from CHIP health care coverage. Outreach will also be conducted via community partners, including WIC clinics, child care agencies, and advocacy groups. For more information, visit www.health.utah.gov/chip or call **1-877-KIDS-NOW**.

